FINAL REPORT

20000347

ON-FARM FOOD SAFETY ASSURANCE PROGRAM FOR CHICKENS

Funded by: The Agri-Food Innovation Fund

March, 2006

Prepared by: Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan

AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION FUND

Canada

Saskatchewan

Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan

Project activities: The CFS participated with the national agency, Chicken Farmers of Canada, in the development of the OFFSAP. The CFS activities also included informing producers of what stakeholders were expecting, running a pilot, and hiring and training auditors. The CFS also had meetings with producers and coaches to detail the program, to motivate producers to move forward with the program, and to develop materials for the program specific to Saskatchewan. Some of the major materials costs were in the signage developed to delineate the controlled access zones on the farms.

Results and conclusions: Implementation of the OFFSAP in Saskatchewan has been a success. Producers participated in meetings held in different production areas. At these it was outlined to them what was expected and why it was seen as important to the industry. At these meetings it was pointed out to the producers the seed money for the launch of the program was coming from the Agri-food Innovation Fund and that as we moved forward the CFS would be putting up some additional funding.

To the end of July all Saskatchewan commercial producers were on the program except for the one licensed commercial "free-range" producer. This producer was unable to qualify as they allow their chicken's exposure to wild birds, rodents, etc. by the nature of the free-range rearing process.

Indications for further development: The CFS, with the national agency, is considering how it may develop a program for the free-range sector of the industry. Any program must meet Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) approval and the exposure to wildlife is extremely difficult to overcome. The CFS is developing protocols for the continuation of the program through the transfer of ownership and management.

Performance indicators: The program was taken up by most producers on a voluntary basis before the CFS board made the decision to make the program mandatory be in the chicken business in Saskatchewan. The CFS board felt this was mandatory to move the final farms through the process.

Chicken producers across Canada were the first commodity to have a CFIA approved program and Saskatchewan was one of the first three provinces to have all producers in compliance.

Satisfaction Level: Producers in Saskatchewan look at the Avian Influenza crises in B.C. and understand what they have implemented on their farms provides assurances to their consumers but also provides some security knowing they are preventing the same.

Personnel: The project involved recruiting and training auditors. There was a husband and wife, Dean and Terri Sully, from the Yorkton area that had been very good producers but had just sold their farm at the time the CFS was developing the program. They both agreed to take the courses.

Chicken producers were the first commodity group to put an on-farm food safety program in place so the auditing courses were relatively expensive as the CFS had to the potential auditors to Ottawa for the first courses. The original application was designed with the expectation the program would be implemented much more quickly. Rather than all personnel expenses occurring in the first year in fact they occurred through the end of March 2005 and are included as such.

When the program was first being introduced the auditors held information meetings for producers to provide a base of generic information. The auditors were unable to answer any specific information about individual farms at these meetings but they gave general overviews about how producers should approach the materials in the manuals.
The CFS also utilized the Poultry Science specialist from the Poultry Extension service at the University of Saskatchewan for the purpose of helping producers understand and implement the program.

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Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan

December 16, 2005

Van Stewart
Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan

REPORT TO:

John Babcock
Agri-Food Innovation Fund

Re: Project 20000347

Summary:

The objectives of the program were to address growing stakeholder concerns about food safety. Stakeholders included processors buying the chicken from farmers, retailers, regulatory bodies and the consumer. Pilot projects were run in every province. The program was then taken out to the membership for implementation. At the same time Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan (CFS) arranged for personnel to assist in the implementation and in the audit process as producers were compliant with the program.

Funding source was one the first questions from the membership and the commitment from the Agri-food Innovation Fund was critical in the success of implementation. Saskatchewan moved ahead of most provinces when implementing because we had funding in place early and could make commitments to auditors, etc. Provinces that, for whatever reason, did not find such assists in funding have been the slowest on the uptake.

Implementation in Saskatchewan is near complete with the CFS board taking steps to make the program mandatory. This was only possible when the uptake on the program in Saskatchewan had reached a critical mass. That point in time was made possible by the early entry of the Agri-food Innovation Fund in the process.

Further evidence of the success of the implementation was witnessed with the recent outbreaks of Avian Influenza in B.C. that brought many media inquiries to the CFS. Saskatchewan was able to explain the OFFSAP in place in this province to give assurances of actions being taken for the stakeholders benefit.

The CFS appreciates the role of the Agri-food Innovation Fund in making Saskatchewan a success and a leader in the OFFSAP.
As a footnote to the discussion Chicken boards across the country, including Saskatchewan are moving to implement auditable animal welfare programs.

Technical Report:

Background and Objectives: As described above there was growing stakeholder concern about food safety. Board members from across the country considered what was feasible to address these concerns and compliment moves in the primary processing industry to have HACCP programs in their facilities.